

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Romantic Sizzle

Author: Cassandra Dallas

The Dilemma of Cassandra Dallas

Cassandra Dallas, that's me, not my given name, but my pen name. So.....I have an alias, and a book I've written entitled GOING DUTCH.

Yes, GOING DUTCH is the beginning, middle and end of a lot of trouble in my life!

You see, it's a sexy novel set in Amsterdam. Some might say a little too sexy! When my three sons heard I had completed the book, they requested I use a pen name, to protect the innocent. Of course I said yes, I would.

On a first date with a guy, who is now my guy, I told him all about the book. Wide-eyed, thinking how incredibly lucky he was to meet a girl that has so much SEX to write about, he christened me "Cassandra Dallas." Well, the name stuck, and he stuck - around with me, that is.

So....you may ask, how did I go from being a nice Jewish girl to a woman whose name sounds like she's a stripper or call girl?

I'm going to let you in on my many secrets - if you promise to keep it all under your hat, and out of the light of social media - because who knows what will happen once people start tweeting about GOING DUTCH, the hot hot novel set in - where else - Amsterdam!

It all started when a friend of mine and I planned a trip to The Netherlands. We would arrive in April, at the height of the tulip season. We'd see the famous windmills, and take a scenic ride on a boat or barge through the canals.

From the moment I gazed at the canals, from the moment I saw the famous old Portuguese Synagogue, from the moment I eyed the tall handsome concierge at our hotel, I knew I was in love with Amsterdam!

My friend went off to the tulips and I went crazy walking the streets of the city, envisioning scenes of romance at every corner, on a houseboat, in a museum, in a castle meant for royalty in the heart of the city.

By the time I returned home, I had the outline of a story. I asked a friend to read the first draft of the novel. Her comment was that if everyone in the world had as much sex as the characters in my book, there wouldn't be any time for wars.

Not satisfied with her praise, I booked another trip to Amsterdam, solo this time. I never felt alone, though. When I told the friendly Dutch citizens I met that I was writing a romantic novel set in their city, they all were my best friends!

People gave me suggestions on places to visit that I could incorporate into my infamous book. On my very last night in Amsterdam, I had dinner at Tempo Doeloe, a wonderful Indonesian restaurant that had become a favorite of mine. One of the waitstaff, Marta, asked me if I had visited the Red Light District yet. I told her I hadn't been there because I was afraid to go alone, the one place in all of Amsterdam that didn't seem safe to me.

(The Red Light District is the place in Amsterdam where prostitutes conduct business, legally I might add.)

Marta insisted on being my tour guide in the District. She said she grew up right nearby and would show me around.

“Meet me in your hotel lobby at ten o'clock tonight,” she instructed me. “And bring with you only twenty euros, enough for a cab ride back to your hotel, and your hotel key card. Take your cell phone if you must, but don't plan to use it as a camera. No photography is allowed there. I guess sex customers want to maintain their privacy.”

I followed Marta's instructions, and met her at the agreed upon time and place. The weather was cool, wonderful for a long walk.

It was Saturday night, and the streets of Amsterdam were full of locals and tourists, all enjoying the restaurants, clubs, outdoor music, getting high on alcohol, marijuana that's legal,

and the exciting atmosphere of the city. Everyone was out strolling. Nobody drove their car in the city because you could walk just about everywhere.

I soon realized we were getting closer to the Red Light District. The narrow winding streets were crowded, mostly with men, and the noise level was getting louder.

“Hey Blondie, how much do you charge?” a man said as he bumped into me. In a panic, I looked for Marta, but she was nowhere to be found. I had left my cell phone back at the hotel room. I ran away from the man, and saw Marta - finally, I was safe!

“You're too slow, Cassandra. Speed it up, will you!” she shouted.

I kept pace with her. In another few minutes, we saw women sauntering down the street, dressed in nothing more than a bra and panties, or a negligee, all wearing the requisite high heeled black boots.

In the store fronts' floor to ceiling windows, the prostitutes displayed themselves to their customers in bewitching costumes.

“Why the sad look, Cassandra?” Marta asked. “It's all legal here in Amsterdam. Those prostitutes, or sex workers as we call them, are saving up money to start businesses or attend college.”

Somehow it just didn't look all that legal to me.

The next day I flew home to Long Island and finished writing GOING DUTCH. The manuscript stayed in a cardboard box in my bedroom closet until I joined The Long Beach Writers' Circle. The constructive criticism and comradery of the group gave me the courage to publish my book.

So, here's my Dilemma.....should I, as Cassandra Dallas, open GOING DUTCH to the public eye via social media? Or should I play it safe?

To give you a taste of what the book is all about, here's a short excerpt to help you advise me:

Our kiss seemed never ending.....I pushed him away....so I could try to rein in my desire for him.

“Your kisses should be illegal,” I whispered.

“Nothing is illegal here in Amsterdam, love. Nothing.”